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March 6, 2026

The Honorable Jesse Gabriel, Chair
Assembly Committee on Budget
1021 O Street, Suite 8230
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable David Tangipa, Vice Chair
Assembly Committee on Budget
1021 O Street, Suite 8230
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Dawn Addis, Chair
Assembly Committee on Budget
Subcommittee No. 1
1021 O Street, Suite 8230
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: FY 2026-27 Budget Request for Feasibility Study of a North State Medical School

Dear Chair Gabriel, Vice Chair Tangipa, and Chair Addis,

I respectfully request \$500,000 in one-time funding to support Simpson University's research and planning activities associated with exploring the establishment of a medical school in Redding to serve California's North State region. This funding would support feasibility analysis, accreditation preparation, and strategic planning necessary to determine the viability of a rural-focused medical school designed to address severe physician shortages in Northern California.

California's Northern and Sierra regions face a significant shortage of physicians, particularly in primary care. Shasta County has formally declared the physician shortage a public health crisis, with more than 40 percent of residents reporting they were unable to access a local primary care provider within the past year and 58 percent experiencing wait times exceeding four weeks for care. Statewide projections show California could face a deficit of 4,000 primary care physicians by 2030, with rural communities bearing the greatest impact.

Across the 17 northernmost counties of California, the supply of primary care physicians falls dramatically below recommended benchmarks. While the recommended ratio is 60–80 primary care physicians per 100,000 residents, the North State region averages

only about 33 physicians per 100,000 residents, roughly 46 percent below the rest of California.

Establishing a regional medical school focused on rural training pathways represents a proven strategy for addressing this workforce gap. Research consistently shows that physicians are far more likely to practice in the communities where they train. By educating medical students in Northern California and embedding clinical rotations within local hospitals and community health centers, a North State medical school would significantly increase the likelihood that graduates remain in the region to practice medicine.

In addition to addressing workforce shortages, medical schools and academic health centers generate significant economic benefits. Nationwide, these institutions support millions of jobs and contribute hundreds of billions of dollars annually to local and regional economies. Rural medical schools, in particular, often become major regional employers while supporting healthcare infrastructure, research activity, and community investment.

Community leaders, healthcare providers, and regional institutions have already begun organizing around this effort through the Coalition for the Exploration of Shasta County Medical Education, working in partnership with Simpson University and local healthcare stakeholders to evaluate the feasibility of launching a medical school designed to serve the needs of rural Northern California.

To support this effort, I respectfully request funding to support the following feasibility and planning activities:

North State Medical School Feasibility Exploration

- \$20,000 – Legal counsel to support regulatory and institutional planning
- \$100,000 – Expert consulting services to evaluate feasibility and planning models
- \$130,000 – Dedicated grant-writing and project coordination staffing
- \$50,000 – Travel and research to study successful rural medical school models
- \$5,000 – Preliminary accreditation inquiry with the WASC Senior College and University Commission

These resources will allow regional partners to conduct the research, planning, and coordination necessary to determine the most viable pathway toward establishing a medical school in the North State.

Investing in this feasibility effort represents an important step toward addressing a critical rural healthcare workforce shortage while strengthening educational and economic opportunities in Northern California. A North State medical school has the potential to transform healthcare access for millions of Californians living in rural communities.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. If you require any further information or would like to discuss this request in more detail, please do not hesitate to contact Andrew Nickens in my office at (916) 319-2011.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Heather Hadwick". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Heather" being more prominent than the last name "Hadwick".

HEATHER HADWICK

Assemblymember, District 1